

WE CLAIM:

1. A process for preparing a herbal extract comprising the steps of:
 - (a) mixing herbal matter with water to produce an aqueous extract solution,
 - (b) adding a nutritive supplement capable of supporting bacterial fermentation to the solution,
 - (c) seeding the resulting mixture with probiotic bacteria, and
 - (d) incubating the seeded mixture to effect fermentation of the herbal matter.
2. A process according to claim 1, wherein the nutritive supplement includes a fermentable carbon source selected from the group consisting of a monosaccharide, a disaccharide and an oligosaccharide; and a nitrogen source selected from the group consisting of yeast extract, corn steep, and meat and plant hydrolyzed extracts.
3. A process according to claim 2, wherein the carbon source is selected from the group consisting of sucrose, maltose, dextrose, fructose, starch and blackstrap molasses at a concentration of 0.001 to 10% of the extract solution; and the nitrogen source is selected from the group consisting of peptone from pancreatically digested casein, soytone and peptone at a concentration of 0.001 to 10% of the extract solution.

4. A process according to claim 1, wherein the nutritive supplement comprises yeast extract, peptone from pancreatically digested casein, dextrose, blackstrap molasses, and L-cysteine in water.
5. A process according to claim 1, wherein the probiotic bacteria is a lactic acid bacteria selected from the group consisting of *Aerococcus sp*, *Alloiococcus sp*, *Carnobacterium sp*, *Dolosigranulum sp*, *Enterococcus sp*, *Globicatella sp*, *Lactobacillus sp*, *Lactococcus sp*, *Lactosphaera sp*, *Leuconostoc sp*, *Oenococcus sp*, *Pediococcus sp*, *Streptococcus sp*, *Tetragenococcus sp*, *Vagococcus sp* and *Weisella sp*, and *Bifidobacterium sp* and *Propionobacterium sp* or selected from the lactic acid producing *Bacillus sp*, *Brevibacillus sp* and *Paenibacillus sp*.
6. A process according to claim 1, wherein the probiotic bacteria is selected from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*.
7. A process according to claim 1, wherein the mixture is dried following fermentation to yield a dry formulation of herbal extract.
8. A process according to claim 7, wherein the mixture is freeze dried in the presence of a cryoprotectant.
9. A process according to claim 8, wherein the cryoprotectant is sucrose, malto-dextrin and glycerol.

10. A process according to claim 7, wherein a prebiotic substance is added to the dry formulation at a concentration of 5 to 90% by weight of the dry formulation.
11. A process according to claim 10, wherein the prebiotic substance is selected from the group consisting of soy-oligosaccharides, xylo-oligosaccharides, galacto-oligosaccharides, fructo-oligosaccharides, isomalto-oligosaccharides, lacto-fructo-oligosaccharides, lactulose, palantinos, lactitol, xylitol, sorbitol and mannitol.
12. A process according to claim 7, wherein a carrier is added to the dry formulation for protecting the probiotic bacteria during passage through a stomach.
13. A process according to claim 12, wherein the carrier is selected from a high amylase starch and shortening.
14. A process according to claim 1, wherein green tea powder, gunpowder tea powder, ground ivy leaves powder, yeast extract, peptone from pancreatically digested casein, dextrose and blackstrap molasses are mixed with water to produce a mixture; the mixture is boiled; L-cysteine is added to the boiled mixture as an oxygen scavenger; the mixture thus produced is heat sterilized and seeded with one strain of each of *Lactobocillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*; and the seeded mixture is incubated to effect fermentation, thereby producing a fermented herbal extract for use as a metabolic stimulant.

15. A process according to claim 1, wherein entire plant artichoke powder, dandelion root powder, strawberry leaf powder, yeast extract, peptone from pancreatically digested casein, dextrose and blackstrap molasses are mixed with water to produce a mixture; the mixture is boiled; L-cysteine is added to the boiled mixture as an oxygen scavenger; the mixture thus produced is heat sterilized and seeded with one strain of each of *Lactobocillus acidophilus*, *Lactobacillus casei* and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, and the seeded mixture is incubated to effect fermentation, thereby producing a fermented herbal extract for use as a hepatic stimulant.
16. A process according to claim 1, wherein the mixture is maintained in a liquid state and stabilized using a food grade preservative
17. A process according to claim 16, wherein said preservative is an organic acid selected from the group consisting of ascorbic, erythorbic, fumaric, citric, malic, acetic, caprylic, lactic, propionic, adipic, tartaric and succinic acids.
18. A process according to claim 16, wherein said preservative is selected from the group consisting of sodium benzoate, potassium benzoate, sodium sorbate, potassium sorbate, sodium propionate, calcium propionate and natamycin.
19. A process according to claim 16, wherein the preservative is a combination of ascorbic acid, benzoic acid and sorbic acids at concentrations of 0.1 to 2%, 0.1 to 1% and 0.03 to 0.1%, respectively by volume of the aqueous herbal extract.